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121 throughout Northern Greece in 1955 and a briefer visit to Attica in 1959
[114] gave me a chance to note the rapid social changes occurring in the places I had come to know well in 1952–53.

The social scientist, if he is to understand the behavior which he studies, not only must observe what is done but also must try to probe the meanings attached by the actors to what they do. Throughout this work, therefore, I have tried to show how the world looks to the Greek villager. I do not necessarily agree with all of his views, but I think that he has the right to be heard. Wherever possible, I have let him speak for himself.

123 Aside from my research activities of the usual type, I also had approaches to the Greeks through the eyes of my wife Margaret who shopped in the Greek market with her Greek neighbors. Through my twelve-year-old daughter Gerda and my ten-year-old son Robert I shared in the wonders of their daily adventures with Greek friends and playmates. I profited by learning about the vicissitudes and the fortitude of our Greek upper-middle-class landlady, who shared her villa with us. The crises attending the succession of maids and laundresses and their husbands opened up avenues for further exploration.

124 Too much credit cannot be given to Bessie Adossides, my interpreter, who knew the Greek countryside as though it were her own garden and who could translate into idiomatic English the most important nuances of the spoken lan-
[122] guage. My reading knowledge of modern Greek improved considerably during the year, but time was too brief for me to learn the spoken Greek sufficiently for conducting interviews on my own.

104 In transliterating Greek terms into Latin letters I have approximated the spelling and have not attempted to follow the pronunciation. Those who speak modern Greek will therefore find the transliteration awkward, but those who have studied ancient Greek will find that many words are familiar.

436 Prior to May 1953 the value of the dollar was 15,000 drachmas; after
[652] that date the dollar was worth 30,000 drachmas. On May 1, 1954, the drachma was revalued at 1 to 1,000, so that 30 drachmas were equivalent to a dollar. For that reason, in using all figures prior to 1954 I have given the 1954 value, moving the decimal point to the left three places.

122 Thanks should be given to the Social Science Research Council for a grant to help me with my Balkan studies; to the Associates for International Research, Inc., of Cambridge, Massachusetts, for extended research and secretarial assistance; to the University of Kentucky and Harvard University for many courtesies shown; and to the American School for Classical Studies in Athens for giving office space to a nonarchaeologist in their richly endowed Gennadion Library.

000 Many individuals have helped me in countless ways. I can only name some of them here to acknowledge my great indebtedness to all. Those listed, of

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Another village in Thessaly tackled this crucial problem of strip holdings in its own way. This village, Nees Karyes, south of Larissa on the main road to Lamia, was another place the director of agriculture wished to visit. On our way there we picked up the agriculturist who, like a county agent, had been the chief adviser to the peasants while they were planning their successful scheme. He recounted the development of the program as we drove to the village. The people of Nees Karyes, like those of Thomai, were also refugees, but they had come to Greece much earlier, in 1907, from Eastern Roumelia, now a part of Bulgaria. Otherwise, they were ordinary villagers, some with more land, some with less. It was the peasants with less who devised a plan.

After World War II, they realized that they could no longer make ends meet with what they had. In May 1952 twenty-three of the men with the smallest holdings in the village came together to talk about what would happen if they pooled their farms and other resources. The land of these 23 families totaled about 575 acres, showing an average per family below that for the other 200 families in the village, but well above the figure for Thessaly. They talked and talked, swapped ideas and contacted the agricultural-extension agent in Larissa. In October 1952 they held their first assembly. They decided to buy a tractor and to follow the advice of the agricultural specialist as to improved methods, type of seed, kind of equipment needed. They decided to combine the 575 acres for production purposes into one farm. The various types of soil are now used to best advantage. Fortunately, the first year had been a good crop year and successes far outstripped expectations. The cooperative into which they organized themselves bought a combine for 60,000 drachmas ($4,000 at the rate of exchange in 1952). But since they would have had to pay out five sixths of that to others as charges for harvesting their grain, they are in reality only 10,000 drachmas ($667) in debt, and sure of the future.

Since this idea of pooling land sounded so much like a collective farm on the Communist model, the government carefully investigated to be sure no subversive influences were at work before it granted any loans. The planners proved to be far from subversive, merely independent peasants with a common-sense approach to an old, old problem.

Our first stop in the village was at a big brick-walled granary almost completed by the cooperative. There we talked with the villager who was the cooperative's secretary. He paid great tribute to the part the government agricultural worker had played in the success of their undertaking. While we fingered the heaped golden grain on the cement floor of the impressive building, I asked, "What made you begin this cooperative in the first place?" The answer was a single eloquent word: "Necessity."

The founders of this cooperative, the twenty-three village families with

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bow to Him. Our tasks are heavy ones and most of the time we live a miserable life. What holds us in life is when we come back at night to our homes and we find our children. What holds us are our festivals, our customs, our holidays, the joys of our children and the love we bear our animals, our birthplace where we have also grown up. To drink water and to eat bread here is better than all the goods we find in the cities. Here we pass each season differently. It is different in winter, different in summer, and different in spring and fall.[1]

### Yannes Needs a Horse; Alekos Buys a Tractor

To work their land to get their bread, the peasants need tools and equipment, draft power and seeds. I had not fully realized the severe limitations under which most Greek peasants tried to carry on in the early 1950s until I talked to Yannes in the shade of a tree just outside of Alistrate (in Macedonia). Yannes, aged twenty-nine years and dressed like most peasants of that area in brown shapeless garments, quickly came over to start a conversation with us when he saw the car come to a stop. During the few preliminaries he played with his small mustache and finally asked:

Did you see me standing over there? It's not because I don't want to work. My animal is there in the team of the man plowing in that field below. He uses mine while he does his work and then I use his animal when I do my plowing. I have my own fields in 13 plots. This man using my horse works on shares; the owner of the field in which he is plowing is a tobacco commission merchant who has altogether 25 acres of good land. The owner in 1950 got 125,000 drachmas [$8,333] to build a poultry house from the government but we haven't seen a sign of a poultry house around here. Had that money been given to the people of Alistrate to get farm animals then we all would have been much better off. Five years ago 200 of us petitioned the Agricultural Bank for draft animals but only 6 people got any.

We did not challenge his poultry-house figure or try to dispel the deep gloom in which he was immersed. But we were willing to listen. He complained about the way American aid was being spent but, when pressed for details, said that this was his impression because "he couldn't see anything being done." Perhaps those who travel around, he pointed out, might see factories going up, dams being built, but he and his people did not believe it because they had nothing tangible, such as animals or equipment. Reflecting the peasants' attitude toward urban life, he said, "Money is for the cities." During the long wait in the refreshing shade, Yannes talked about his family.

"I have eight members in my family. Now we have only yogurt thinned with water for these eight people to eat. For forty-three months I was a soldier and came home thinking things would be better, but the Bulgarians

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At first I had to hire a driver for the tractor but my boy rode around with him, asked a few questions, and learned how to drive. So the second season I turned the tractor over to my son. Unfortunately, some people start driving before they know how and that is why an inexperienced person killed two men the other day not far from here.

Alekos estimated that only 30 percent of the tractor owners hired drivers and that the rest of the owners drove themselves or had members of their family who could drive. He thought that this shift away from hiring drivers would mean a trend from the bigger tractors to smaller tractors for, as he put it, "If you are going to pay for a driver you might as well get a larger tractor and get your money's worth out of the driver. If you are going to do the work yourself, a small tractor is sufficient." Not many of them who now drove, he thought, were very skillful at repairs; they were dependent on the tractor shops in town or upon the traveling automobile-borne shops which came out to the village when necessary.

In the midst of our conversation on tractors, Alekos interrupted to say, much to the amusement of the three other men who had gathered around the stone wall where we sat, that he had at first been suspicious of us: "Some of us thought you were either tax collectors or officials from the Agricultural Bank. We were ready to run away until we heard somebody cry out, 'Americans!' "

That reminded one of the bystanders of a good story he had heard from an acquaintance in the Peloponnesos who lived near Messenia. It seems that while a funeral procession was under way there, those participating saw a car with a policeman and other officials thought to be tax collectors. In perfect unison the pallbearers rested the coffin in the middle of the road and disappeared as though into thin air, leaving the officials confronting the lonely coffin.

After a laugh all around the circle, we steered Alekos back onto the subject of his tractor in order to find out why he had bought a Lantz tractor instead of an American tractor. He thought the latter much more complicated. Diesel tractors, both German and American-made, are preferred to the gas-driven type.

"Has the tractor made much difference in your life?"

Alekos furrowed his brows and thought a moment. "Yes, it has made me work much harder to pay off the debt I owe because of the tractor." He agreed that the machine had probably not lightened his wife's work very much, but a shrug of the shoulders seemed to imply, "why should it?"

Throughout the plains area of Greece I met many men like Alekos who, in one financial plunge, had leaped from the peasant farming of their fathers into the machine farming of the Western world.[4] Unlike Alekos, some of them seemed to think that the work of the women as well as that of the men had been considerably lightened. One man from Schematari,

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Peloponnesos



will buy to put on his lead ram. Then he will pick another deep bell for his eldest ewe, but will always test it against the deepest bell for what seems to be harmony to his ear. As he buys the smaller bells with the higher sounds, he always compares each with the deepest bell. In a flock of about 200, he may have as many as 60 to 70 carefully tested bells. The sound of a flock grazing or in movement is always pleasing even to the casual passerby. But to the shepherd it is the sweetest music of all, for it is as though his own private orchestra were playing for him, telling him by each little sound much about the behavior of his flock. If one note is missing for very long, he becomes aware of it and investigates to see what is wrong. When all are ringing together, he feels his little universe is safe.

As I walked through the village, I tried to picture it in the cold and empty winter. Obviously, the people from Valtetsi scatter out quite widely once they get below. What kind of community can they maintain with such a migration pattern? The shepherd's answers to queries about organizational life gave a rough sketch of the Valtetsi community.

Like other villages, they have the village council. The president of the council, who happens to run a coffeehouse, must stay in the village throughout the year. He can, on occasion, get a two-week leave from the prefect in Tripolis.

"Suppose he owned livestock," I asked, "and had to take them to winter pastures below. What would he do?"

"Other members of his family would have to take care of the animals for him and he would remain here."

Local elections are postponed from winter until the return of most of the people in the spring. But for national elections the men leave the flocks with their womenfolk and older children and walk all the way back up to the village to cast their ballots.

Valtetsi also has its school board, church board, and a livestock cooperative that helps its members get some credit from the Agricultural Bank, with their flocks as collateral (it serves no marketing function). Yet the migration pattern affects even these organizations, for at the time of my visit the cooperative president had not yet returned from his winter's sojourn on the plain nor had all of the board members for the church or the school.

In spite of the periodic absence of its inhabitants, the loyalty to Valtetsi is strong. Not the least of village distinctions was the Battle of Valtetsi, in which local people claim that in 1821 the first victorious army of Greeks under Kolokotrones rose up against the Turks. Since the soldiers believed that the Virgin had aided that victory, taking part just as Hera and Athena did with their forces deployed in the Trojan War, a special church to the Virgin was built in the village in 1837. One of the most heinous

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peasants argued to the foresters: "Ten communities in this area formerly made their living from goats and prospered; we know of no village which has made its living solely off forest products. We prefer the goats."

Then, as though to clinch their arguments, they pointed out that they must stable their goats for only forty days during a year, but their sheep, which cannot browse, need to be stabled and fed at home for one hundred and fifty days a year. To the peasants this is obviously an advantage; to the forestry program it is just as obviously a menace. The result: impasse.

The same question is being raised all over the country in villages as far apart as some on the Bulgarian border in Central Macedonia and others around Amphissa in Roumele. From the standpoint of these villagers the goat is the answer, but the central government seems to be backing the Forestry Office. Some commentators on the issue point out that the peasant's practice of setting fires to burn over land or accidentally starting fires through carelessness is perhaps as big an enemy to trees as the goat. It will be interesting a generation from now to see who has won out in these isolated mountainous outposts of Greece. (My bet is on the goat.)

A final contrast will reveal the complexity of small-livestock production in a country as regionally diverse as Greece. Many villages could be cited which twenty-five years ago possessed twenty thousand sheep or more. With the passing of the years, the numbers declined because of the gradual shrinkage of available pasture area. While sheep are still raised in these communities today, they are being further reduced and turned into "home flocks" fed in or near the village throughout the year. But a reverse process has also been in motion since 1950. In tobacco villages around Xanthe, in Thrace, sheep raising is being pushed by the agricultural authorities and loans are being extended by the Agricultural Bank — all to serve the double purpose of giving the depressed tobacco farmer some supplementary income and also to take advantage of unutilized pasture land in that part of the country.

This illustrates the fact that sheep (and goats) still are the best and at times the only sound economic adjustment to some of the terrain areas of Greece; almost everywhere they are good supplementary means of adjustment. There will probably be a stepped-up trend toward pasture improvement, which means that pastures — particularly those on the plains — can be made to carry more animals per acre. The day may come when the sheep will be driven in large trucks up to their summer pastures, thus avoiding the days of grazing along the roads of migration, or in many of the agricultural areas dairy cattle may replace sheep as producers of milk. But these developments are still in the future.

Symbolic of what seems to be in store for many shepherds was the quiet, middle-aged man we met in front of a coffeehouse in the refugee village of Menidi, between Agrinion and Arta in Roumele. There along the sea he

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exclusive use of the members of the society; and protection by law from interference by outside interests. In return for these privileges, the state reserved the right to approve the by-laws of the cooperatives and to inspect and audit their books.[4]

Between the two world wars some of the cooperatives took on a compulsory character. For instance, many refugees who were settled on land in the 1920s were formed into cooperatives which could not be dissolved or from which individuals could not withdraw until complete payment was made. In some districts citrus and grape producers were compelled to deliver their products to the cooperatives. Also, compulsory cooperatives, organized by a majority vote of the farmers in a region, could take over the common utilization of land, forests, and pastures, or the task of grafting of barren and wild trees. Quite aside from these compulsory cooperatives and the widespread credit cooperatives, there were many voluntary cooperatives for marketing, production, and insurance against fire, hail, and frost.

In Greece, as in all other Balkan countries, the agricultural cooperatives through the years have been under the supervision of the Agricultural Bank, from which the government channeled credit to the rural sector of the economy. The local societies were grouped into regional cooperative unions. Instead of having to deal individually with each peasant who wanted a loan on his livestock or against the next crop, the government officials could leave the initial screening of applications to local cooperative officials, then to those at the regional level, while reserving for themselves final approval. Under Metaxas, who ruled as a dictator just prior to World War II, the cooperative section of the Agricultural Bank received no support and, in all probability, cooperatives would have found continuation difficult if Metaxas had been in power for a long period.[5]

Then came the war years, which were difficult for cooperatives as well as for everything else in Greece. The situation at the end of the war was described in 1946 when the newly created Food and Agriculture Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations, sent its very first Mission team to Greece to survey the situation and make recommendations. This team, headed by Franklin S. Harris, President of the Utah State College of Agriculture, found that the "machinery" of cooperative activities had developed to such a point before World War II that it could provide an important facility for postwar rural rehabilitation.[6] Most of the FAO Mission's recommendations dealt with ways in which this facility could best be used. However, at least two points were brought out which have a direct bearing upon the peasant himself. The first suggests that greater responsibility be given the local village cooperative, thereby placing more control over making individual production loans, receiving repayments, and keeping the individual loan accounts in the hands of the peasants themselves. The general tendency in most cooperative systems is for the center of gravity

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to shift away from the village to the national capital, where the Agricultural Bank is located, or to the provincial cities, where the bank has branches to which the individual peasants are supposed to go to "process" their loans.

A second important question touched upon in the FAO report was whether the producers' cooperative ought to be compulsory in one or both of two ways: first, requiring all of those who produce a given commodity (such as tobacco) and who live in a given village to belong to a cooperative and, second, forcing all cooperative members to market their produce and buy their supplies only through the cooperative. The FAO Mission counseled against making the cooperatives compulsory, and the same point of view has been held by most of the American advisers who have worked with the American Aid Mission in Greece. Greek government officials, however, sometimes think that legal sanctions would strengthen cooperatives and thereby tighten the economic machinery through which 10–12 percent of the Greek tobacco crop and about 80 percent of olive oil, to mention but two crops, reach the market.[7]

The cooperative leaders, however, face a problem of social as well as legal sanctions: they would like to guide the cooperative movement from the stage where each cooperative member is a law unto himself to the point where any farmer who fails to sell his produce through his cooperative has to reckon with the disapproval of his fellow farmers. This can only be done through a long-term program of education which stresses not cooperation as an abstract ideal but the fact that a cooperative organization depends upon the support of every member and is not much stronger than its weakest link. It is in this matter of interpretation, of teaching the villager the meaning of cooperation, that the cooperative movement is not very successful. Cooperative officials are so busy being administrators that they do not take time to be interpreters, to be sure their communication strikes a responsive chord in the peasant. Then, too, they tend to feel that they have so much authority (such as fiscal control) in their hands that they do not have to depend upon the subtler forms of authority — namely, pressure by loyal members upon those who would deviate from what is considered good cooperative practice. This is tied in with the psychological problem of making the members feel that the cooperative is theirs rather than the instrumentality of cooperative and governmental officials who live outside the community.

One report by A. W. Willis, an American marketing specialist, goes so far as to say: "The Greek cooperative law makes cooperatives an arm of the Government and actually prohibits member control as well as any profit acquiring to members. The entire agricultural economy of this state could profit through true Cooperatives but not through those now in existence under the present law."[8]

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How strong are cooperatives in Greece today? In 1957, they numbered 7,127 and had a membership of 718,000.[9] They therefore constitute the principal farm organization in Greece. Those who lead the cooperative movement are quick to point out what they hope to achieve: to narrow the ratio between prices received by the farmers and prices paid by the farmers; to market members' products and purchase for them equipment and supplies; to process farm commodities, produce pesticides, farm machinery; and to provide special services for members such as plowing, cultivating, and harvesting.[10] Since many of the Greek farmers are too impoverished to raise sufficient capital on their own to finance a local cooperative, they are therefore dependent upon those cooperatives for which the government, through the Agricultural Bank, provides all the funds and over which it insists on centralized control.

## How the Villagers View Cooperatives

What the FAO study team, the American missioners, and even the Greek government officials think about agricultural cooperatives is secondary to what the Greek peasants themselves think. Their opinions ranged all the way from those of open resentment and hostility to those of great pride in local cooperative achievements. To be told, as was mentioned in Chapter 5, that some villagers whom we wanted to see had hid upon our arrival, for they thought that we were either cooperative officials or connected with the Agricultural Bank, was an object lesson in itself. We asked one of them why he had run away. He replied: "I still owe the Bank a great deal. We have to pay 9 percent interest on what we borrow, 1 percent to the cooperative and 8 percent to the Bank. Last year I hadn't paid off my loan ($70.), so I couldn't get a new loan. I borrowed what I needed from a private individual at 20 percent and paid off this loan to the bank so that I could obtain potato seed on a new loan. Now I have sold my potatoes and the Bank will be after me to pay them what I owe."

When we asked what happened to people who did not repay their loans, we were told that in such cases the collector came out, wrangled with the people, and if he received no repayment took them to court. To such villagers, cooperatives were chiefly credit agencies and in no sense stood for a local association of farmers pooling their energies and resources to achieve joint goals.

Now and then we found peasants who were anxious to start a cooperative but considered the initiation difficult. In a village near Megalopolis in the Peloponnesos, the people were well aware of the difference between prices received in the village for watermelons and what such products cost in Athens. Like farmers everywhere, they thought the price differences unjust. They blamed bureaucratic red tape for holding up the establishment of a cooperative. Some of the more dubious went on to say: "Even if we do

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474 [652] get a cooperative, we will have to wait a year to get a loan approved, and by that time we will have no need for the money." They thought that from 12 to 14 percent would be the customary interest charges set by the cooperative and the Bank and also assumed that security requirements would be very high.

[249] [664] [124] Peasants in the tobacco-growing areas in Northern Greece appreciated the fact that cooperatives there tried to introduce mechanization and also, from time to time, did some lobbying in their behalf. When in 1953 we asked the commandant of gendarmerie for Volos, who was in close touch with the villagers, about their views toward cooperatives he replied: "With the occupation and the war the cooperative conscience more or less disappeared. Now it is reviving and if things go normally there will be quick improvement. One reason for the difficulty is the effort by the government to mix politics in with the cooperative movement. Now the cooperatives undertake no teaching function. They did this before the war, which partially explained what success they achieved. Before the war, if a person wanted to be on the council of the cooperative, he had to go through special training. [654] The authorities say that they will do this again, but the Ministry of Agriculture is centering its teaching approach in the newly formed Agro Clubs."

He thought that in his area about 60 percent of the cooperatives were working and that 40 percent were either anemic or altogether defunct. [241] [652] Around Volos the producers' and marketing cooperatives organized on a commodity basis — vegetables, dairy, fruit, olives — worked better than the general-purpose or purely credit type. Very often, he pointed out, the relationship between the local cooperative and the representatives of the Agricultural Bank is strained, for the local council will give inaccurate information to the Bank, saying that a would-be borrower has twelve acres of land when he really has only five.

474 178 [621] One of the most interesting examples of the blending of traditional and modern mutual-aid practices was found in Kalivi, a village of about 2500 in Attica. This village owned some pasture land. In 1914 it formed a committee which took charge of the management of this community land, deriving revenues for the community. In 1920 there was talk of organizing a cooperative, but it did not really get under way until 1926, at which time the village pasture land was turned over to the cooperative which superseded the former committee. Thus, the transition from the older social form [652] to the cooperative went smoothly. The Agricultural Bank had helped the local people decide what was the best kind of cooperative organization for their purposes. They decided that membership should be compulsory for all family heads. In 1928 the cooperative acquired a threshing machine with [243] the funds obtained from the pasture land. This machine as well as newer ones were in use when I visited the village near the middle of June 1953. [293] [751] Organized pandemonium seemed to reign as new loads of wheat sheaves

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Kalivi, Attica



were fed to the threshing machine by the girls, who were wearing goggles and what seemed to be gas masks to protect them from the dust. The women also were wiring the bales of straw which were taken away to be stacked. The president of the community told me:

> Anyone who wants to work signs up. Every fifteen days we put on a new crew so that quite a few people are employed and paid. We do have to keep a small permanent crew on the job throughout the threshing season, which lasts about sixty days, but almost every family has a chance to get some benefit. We only do the wheat belonging to the people of our community. We determine by lot the order in which a family's wheat is to be threshed. All the people bring their grain here, for we can thresh it much more cheaply than they could do it with animals.

We then went into the large olive-pressing plant, built in 1948, with a loan of about $30,000 from the Agricultural Bank, and learned how this part of the cooperative's business was conducted. We learned that each family's batch of olives, like its wheat, was processed separately and that it gave 8 percent of the oil to the cooperative, which is a standard amount taken by presses over Greece, plus an extra 3 percent contribution until the machinery is paid for. After that, it will have to pay only 4 instead of the customary 8 percent. When I noticed an icon in the pressing plant, the manager said that they asked the priest in to bless their work at the beginning of the season. Another man in the company remarked, "we like our religion, but we don't like our priests," a comment with which the others seemed to agree.

The more I learned about this cooperative in Kalivi, the more I realized what a shrewd investment the pasture land had been. The cooperative accumulates no money for itself but reinvests all profits into public works or special funds as determined by the directors of the cooperative. For example, a doctor is paid out of a cooperative philanthropic fund in return for looking after the poor of the community free of charge.

In addition to this general cooperative, to which all family heads belong, there are in Kalivi five other cooperatives. First, there is the credit cooperative explained to me as follows: "Since many people here have to depend upon the Agricultural Bank for loans, the credit cooperative gets the money for them and they do not have to make the contact themselves. If a local peasant wants sulphur or insecticides, the cooperative gets all that is needed. The individual then owes the cost to the cooperative. He pays no membership dues. Both men and women belong." It so happened that the president and the secretary of the community, plus three other people, made up the five-man executive committee of this credit cooperative.

Second, there is a livestock cooperative which the owners of the five thousand sheep in the community support. The members number forty,

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Kalivi, Attica



474 the executive committee five, and the supervising board three. This cooperative helps bring in fodder, sell milk, arrange loans. If a member has taken a loan, he must give milk to the cooperative as payment on the loan. In some types of loan the shepherd can be responsible directly to the Agricultural Bank. There are three other cooperatives of lesser importance. Everybody belongs to the vineyard cooperative, for all grow grapes, but this cooperative has not been very active of late due to a number of economic changes taking place in the village. Fifteen people belong to an apiary cooperative; and fifteen others belong to a poultry cooperative, since this is a growing source of income for the local people.

These reactions to cooperatives document some of the general observations made earlier about the movement. There is a tendency for the foreigner to side with those peasants who are most critical of the way cooperatives are now being run, but any such critic must be prepared to explain how one can expect much local control unless the local villagers put up some of the working capital, as did the villagers of Kalivi with their pasture land. For the most part, members of the Greek cooperatives make no contributions, buy no shares, pay only nominal membership fees, for the reason that they do not have sufficient economic margin. Those officials who lend public funds have to concentrate on control and collection, since it is an accepted practice in Greece, as in many parts of the world, for the farmer to borrow as much as he can and pay back as little as he can. The educational task, then, is the difficult one of teaching the necessity of honoring one's contracts to the cooperative as truly as the peasant honors his informal agreements to pay back labor in a traditional mutual-aid activity. It also calls for the community-wide recognition that peasants who are defaulting on their payments are hurting fellow members in the cooperative and should in time be made to feel the censure of those who are keeping agreements. But, most important of all, the cooperatives could be interpreted as social mechanisms through which the peasants can do more than merely borrow money or get fertilizer on credit — as avenues through which they can effectively increase their general economic well-being.

476 In the final analysis, however, mutual aid in a Greek village consists of more than the informal patterns, such as the potato-digging group of Neochori; it is more than the cooperative organizations in all of their variations. It also includes the philanthropic assistance, to be discussed in connection with religion, and the "voluntary labor" required of the community members by their community council, an interesing form of mutual effort to be discussed under local government.

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mata, at the southern part of the Peloponnesos. When we discussed the attitude of the peasants toward Athens and the central government, he commented: "Life in the village is difficult; Athens has had special privileges. The villages are 100 percent right in their complaints. In my nomos many of them have no roads, no irrigation or drainage. Their education is so far behind that it is pitiful; their homes are in awful condition. How can a peasant under such circumstances feel gratitude! Paying for the priest and the teacher should be the job of the central government in the same way that a father supports a child. The recent decision to turn back to the communes a share of the tobacco tax is encouraging the villagers very much. Here it will amount to about one dollar yearly per capita."

When I asked him more about the actual workings of the communes in his nomos, he repeated much that others had said:

> The president of the community represents in a small way the national government. So the community council is both an arm of the central government and also a representative of the local village. All decisions of the council have to be communicated to the nomarch; this is compulsory. If the council and president decide to spend any of the local funds the nomarch has the right to say "yes" or "no." If they wish to add a paid employee, the nomarch will check to see whether it is legal or not. If the nomarch does not answer in two weeks' time, then the local council has the right to go ahead without further permission. But the villagers for the most part are not conscious of their rights after the expiration of the two-week period and are capable of waiting fifteen years. The chief reason for delays in such matters is the lack of sufficient personnel in the nomarchy.

During 1952–53, the possibility seemed strong of developing a capable, well-trained group of nomarchs, all of whom were supposed to have security of tenure and not be subject to dismissal except for carefully defined "cause." These nomarchs were being sent to England, the United States, and elsewhere to study how local governments functioned, and to see what ideas might be adaptable to Greece. The community presidents, over and over again, expressed appreciative comments on the work of many of these nomarchs. To be sure, in some villages I found that the nomarch had not yet made himself known, but I had the general impression that a much better relationship was building up between the peasantry and the national government because of the changed attitudes of friendliness and understanding on the part of these key officials. When I revisited Greece in 1955 for another study period, I found that the Minister of Interior in early March 1954 had rescinded the career-nomarch legislation and had immediately dismissed one third of the nomarchs. According to one observer:

> The odd characteristic about these dismissals was that they were not necessarily based on political opinions nor on efficiency. Several strongly-pro-government nomarchs were dismissed despite known efficiency. Apparently this arose

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) #63 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



steel plow, or he can hire a tractor to do the job. The hiring of the tractor includes fuel and the services of a tractor operator.

Two farmers in Vasilika own tractors—one made the purchase in 1952 (a British Ferguson), the other in 1956 (a British Fordson). They were bought on the installment plan with credit extended by the Agricultural Bank of Greece. The tractor operators are a son and a nephew, respectively, of each of the owners. Both of the farmers who purchased tractors have landholdings which are large for the region, perhaps as many as sixty *stremata* but divided into tracts of some ten to twenty *stremata* each. Even if the land were not divided into such small parcels, there would not be enough return on so little land for economically sound use of a tractor. Both the bank management and the farmers are well aware of this, so that credit for the purchase of the machinery is given with the understanding that the owner will use the tractor as a capital investment and earn income from it by renting it out.

Farmers decide to hire or not to hire a tractor for the fall plowing on the basis of practical considerations of the moment. If weather conditions have been normal in the late summer and early fall, a farmer will be more likely to proceed with his horse-drawn plowing. If, however, early rains have delayed the cotton picking and all hands are needed in the cotton fields when the wheat fields should be plowed, a farmer may hire a tractor to be sure that the job gets done before the winter rains. Most of the farmers maintain a horse to use as a pack animal, in any case, so that it is obviously cheaper to plow with the horse. For increased efficiency, two farmers sometimes contribute one horse apiece, so that the team of horses working on each of their fields in turn will get the work done faster and at no additional cost. For wheat, the farmers say, the deeper plowing of the tractor is not important, so whenever possible they work with the animals. For cotton, as we shall see later, they believe tractor plowing increases the yield. Generally speaking, as one might expect, the farmers with fewer land resources tend to make less use of the tractors than those who can expect a good cash income from their fields and so can afford the outlay for the hire of a tractor.

After the broadcast sowing of the wheat (which is done on each *strema* immediately after it has been plowed) and the dragging of the fields, what remains is some light hoeing to be done in February and March, the spreading by hand of some chemical fertilizer at about the same time, and when the weather warms up, the spraying of a chemical weed killer by means of a hand-operated pressure pump. A farmer who does not own such a pump borrows one from a neighbor, and no charge is made for its use.

Harvesting of the wheat crop is done almost entirely by machine in Vasilika. Reaper and thresher combines, with their operators, make the rounds of the Boeotian plains villages at harvest time in June. The threshed wheat is weighed out in the fields and the machine operators are paid promptly with twelve percent of the crop. Chaff and straw left in the fields are collected by the household and made into small packages to be used for bedding down the animals. Each farmer may set aside four or five *stremata* of his wheat field to be reaped by hand with a standard sickle. He then hires a thresher with operator

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



243 427 at a cost of eight percent of the amount of the wheat threshed. This machine leaves the straw in suitable condition for a baler which is hired next to press the straw into bales for food for the horses, mules, and donkeys.

[231] [471] [407] The harvesting machinery is privately owned by entrepreneurs in the towns. Simple threshers have been known and used on the Boeotian plain for a generation at least. The combine has appeared only since World War II and the hay baler only since the early 1950's. What accounts for the increasing willingness of the farmers to pay for machine operations on their wheat crop? Unquestionably, the growing efficiency of cotton production and the success of [241] [433] cotton and tobacco as cash crops enable the farmers to concentrate their labor and attention on cotton and tobacco production and to let the growing cash value [242] of the crops make up for the loss of a certain percentage of the wheat crop. However, chemical fertilizers and weed killers have increased the wheat yields, and since payment for machine harvesting is in kind and not in cash, the entire transaction can be managed at what to the farmers is a minimal cost.

243 437 A household uses its own wheat for making its bread, and bread is still literally the staff of life, the basic food for the people of the village. Wheat is also used for a kind of cereal called *trakhana* and for egg noodles. It is given as [262] payment to the shepherds, whose wives turn the wheat income into their families' [438] bread supply. It continues to be used as an alternative medium of exchange for fish, olive oil, olives, coffee, and other household necessities not locally produced. [231] As we have seen, the wheat straw is useful for the care of animals, and finally, in an emergency, some wheat can always be sold for cash.

246 231 A typical farmer of Vasilika reserves four or five *stremata* of his land for oats, barley, and clover. These furnish food for the pack animals not only during the winter, but also in the early summer when the animals are permitted to graze in the oat and clover fields as the crops mature. A small corner of a 244 grain field may be used for lentils and beans, which add to the household's food 262 supply.

248 312 406 The crops which most interest the farmers of Vasilika today are cotton and tobacco. Because of the dry summers in Boeotia cotton production in the region depends on irrigation. The high water-table makes well-pump irrigation feasible. This system is also suited to the patterns of the rural social structure [249] since it requires no centralized control or authority—each farmer household can dig its own well and work its own pump for its own fields. Any man who has [621] not yet purchased a pump can hire the use of one owned by a farmer with [427] adjacent fields.

Cotton became a significant cash crop for Vasilika around 1936 when one of the farmers who had heard about horse-driven well-pumps set one up for himself and the other farmers soon followed suit. Since World War II, [632] British-manufactured diesel pumps bought on the installment plan with credit extended from the Agricultural Bank have replaced the horse-drawn equipment. [427] Diesel pumps, like the tractors, may be rented by the day and the renter pays for fuel also. The market for the use of the pump goes beyond the village itself

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



and rain. After the winter rains, the women keep watering the tiny plants and fertilize them regularly. The chemical fertilizer which is provided by the Agricultural Bank requires careful handling. Women explain that too much fertilizer will burn the tender plants, and they take pride in their success in applying just the right amount. Conversely, they ridicule any unfortunate woman who is so unskillful as to have burned her plants. As the tobacco plants grow and the weather gets warmer, occasional rains make worms and snails a hazard in the seed bed. In March and April, at dusk, women are seen stooping at the seed beds collecting and killing these parasites.

The winter of 1955–1956 was an unusually cold and long one, and Vasilika still had some snow in March. Many households had to plant tobacco three or four times in the course of the winter and spring, and several households ran out of seed. The abnormal weather with flooding rains in March and no rain for much of April delayed transplanting. Ordinarily, the tobacco plants are about four inches high in early April, and can be transplanted then. By that time, the fields are usually sufficiently well drained and yet still have enough moisture for the tobacco to "catch" as the villagers put it. In the spring of 1956, the fields were too dry by the time the tobacco was ready for transplanting. Some households resorted to carrying water from the wells, a gallon can at a time, making a hole with a small steel hook, pouring a small amount of water into the hole, and then placing the young tobacco plant into it. Everyone was thoroughly disgusted with the back-breaking and tedious labor, not normally connected with the tobacco crop, and men and women alike (both work at transplanting) were vociferous in their complaints. Tobacco, here, needs no irrigation. Therefore, although some of the farmers were willing to put their pumps into operation to irrigate the tobacco fields during this extraordinarily dry season, most of the tobacco fields were too far from the irrigation wells to make that entirely feasible.

Usually in late June or early July, the outer leaves of the tobacco are ready to be picked. Both men and women work at plucking the three or four outer leaves of the plants, and then sit in family groups on the ground in the shade stringing the leaves in preparation for hanging them over the canes. This kind of work normally follows the hoeing of cotton and is especially welcome. As we would pass from one part of the village to another, at this time, we would hear exclamations of satisfaction and enjoyment as people explained what a relief it was to be able to work out of the hot sun, near their houses, and sitting down besides. The tobacco stringing is a job in which even very young children can help, and they sit with the adults piercing with holes the tobacco leaves through which their elders eventually pass the string. Throughout the summer, periods of cotton hoeing alternate with periods of tobacco cutting and stringing.

Once strung, the tobacco is hung up to dry on frames which are set up on poles out of doors. A tobacco growers' association has recently distributed canvas shelters to prevent the soaking of the leaves by unexpected summer rains. When no such canvas is available, the tobacco is taken inside the barns each

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) #3 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



night. In October, the dried tobacco is pressed into bales by machines the farmers have for the purpose, and is then ready for sale.

A farmer can get 720 *okadhes* of tobacco from 6 *stremata* of land, and if he succeeds in selling the entire crop at 30 drachmas an *oka*, he receives the equivalent of $720. This is a very good income, indeed, especially when it is added to that derived from cotton.

Vasilika farmers are obviously in need of some capitalization to finance what have become considerable investments necessary for producing their wheat, cotton, and tobacco. Whether or not the farmers' savings would be adequate to finance their crops, the fact is that Vasilika farmers do not want to use their accumulated savings to invest in their own farms. Cash drachma savings are exchanged for gold English sovereigns or French or Italian specie, which accumulations are then set aside for the dowries of the girls of the family or to pay for the education of a son. The only notable exception to this use of savings is that the farmer who becomes wealthy enough to feel that his obligations to his children are taken care of may buy land if the opportunity presents itself. At the same time that the farmer does not want to spend savings on the current production of his crops, he is eager for an increased cash income to secure the future of his children. Increased cash income is possible only through investment in his farm. How does he get out of the dilemma? He willingly accepts credit from the Agricultural Bank of Greece. In addition, farmers accept from the bank the needed seed, artificial fertilizers, and chemical weed killers and insect sprays. March is the month in which the loans are made by the bank, so that the farmers always receive their money before Easter. Both the manager of the Agricultural Bank in Levadhia and we were aware of the fact that some of the money was used for Easter finery and Easter feasting. We had the impression that the farmers considered the loan as cash income to be spent as they wished. The repayments of principle and interest due in October were viewed by the farmers as something like an additional expense or tax chargeable against current income from the produce, and in this sense, not as expenditure of savings.

## Miscellaneous Crops

Each household maintains a small kitchen garden near the cotton fields. This location permits the farmers to irrigate and to tend to the garden at the same time they work with the cotton. Both men and women work in the gardens to raise tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, squash, and melons of various kinds, but only to the extent necessary for immediate consumption by the household and its hired farm labor through the growing season. No effort is made to produce surplus for canning or for any other kind of home processing. Besides the summer vegetable gardens, in the early spring, the women of a few households fence off a rectangular area near the houses and plant spring onions, lettuce, spinach, and a type of lima bean called *kukya*. The wire or reed fenc-

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



the community. The secretary tends to remain in office for many years, thereby becoming the equivalent of a permanent civil servant.

The president is held responsible for the completion of the tasks assigned to him and to his council. These include registration of births and deaths, a census of males every five years, the physical maintenance of the roads and public wells in the village, the preparation of the community tax rolls, and the preparation of an annual village budget.

In a community the size of Vasilika the maintenance of vital statistics is not an onerous task, since births, deaths, and the age and sex distribution of the population are matters of common knowledge. The maintenance of village property is a more complicated matter. Funds for materials are available in the village's account, which is held by the treasury at Amphiklia. The community may not draw on its account without the approval of the nomarch. Therefore, any public works program in the village is first formulated by the council and then sent for final approval to the nomarch's office. Village males who are more than fifteen years old are responsible for providing labor for road building and for minor repairs of village property. They may either give a certain number of days a year to work on such public projects or fulfill the obligation by furnishing money for a substitute. There is no effective practical way of enforcing adherence to the commitment. The state of the village roads and wells depends, therefore, on whether the village men are willing to work together to create a village asset.

In the course of our 1955–1956 stay at Vasilika a special impetus for road repairs presented itself. The council had requested that one bus a day traveling between Kifisokhori and Levadhia be rerouted so as to pass through the village. The nomarch had indicated that he would approve the change if the village road was repaired, and he authorized the necessary materials. One day in March, truckloads of earth were brought into the village and about one quarter of the adult male population shoveled the loose earth into the main ruts on the village road. The road was superficially improved thereby, and a month or so later a bus was routed through the village. The poor drainage from one of the wells was not corrected, however, so that the regular spillage from the well quickly restored the old puddles in the road.

The men and boys who worked on the road project lacked their customary vigor. Indeed, the majority of the male population of the village claimed to have work to do in the fields that day and did not join in the road work at all. There was much joking, teasing, and clowning while the work was going on, and the efforts of two of the older men to convince the group to set to work with a will were unavailing. The attitude of the road workers requires explanation because all the villagers were agreed on the importance of the new bus route and they actively dislike mud. The muddiness of the village road in winter and early spring was a particular subject for comment and several times evoked the question, "Do you have mud in America, too?" An Athenian who visited the village in late spring was critical of the villagers because their *aghora* was unpaved. "Don't you have a lot of mud all winter?" she asked. "Oh no, we don't have any mud in winter. Very little," was the response from one of the villagers. He would not even admit to so unsightly a condition.

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 93 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



653 461 491 The reluctance of the villagers to work on the road seems to result not from a lack of motivation but rather from a more compelling distaste for manual labor, and especially for such work when it does not directly or immediately benefit each man's own family. Several years later when a new school was built, some of the parents of the school children helped with parts of the construction. The other villagers did not.

651 623 The preparation of the community tax rolls is an important responsibility of the village council. Since taxes are based on land tenure, on produce, and on livestock ownership, the council must prepare lists of people who own land within the boundaries of the *kinotis*. The lists include for each person information on the number of *stremata* in each parcel of land he owns, on the kind of crop raised on each parcel, and on the quality of the land. Lists of the number of horses, mules, sheep, and goats owned by each villager are also compiled. Donkeys and chickens are not taxed and no listing is made of them. The tax is calculated for each item and the completed tax rolls are posted. A villager may feel that he has been unfairly treated, that, for example, the quality of his vineyard [627] has been overestimated or that he has fewer sheep than the number listed. In such a case he can request a revision from the council. His request is usually granted and that settles the matter. If he is not satisfied, he may ask for a hearing before a grievance committee, the members of which are proposed by the council from among the villagers. Any decision of the committee is subject to the veto [634] of the nomarch. In Vasilika disputes over tax rolls are said not to occur, 651 and no grievance committee has been established for many years. There had been a dispute with Parori in the 1930's over the boundaries of the two communities. 628 Since each *kinotis* receives taxes from the land within its boundaries the 692 question of where one *kinotis* begins and the other ends is of considerable importance. The argument between the two villages was finally settled in the courts.

641 651 In connection with the preparation of tax rolls, the president has some power over the shepherds living in the community. Anyone classified as a non-resident of Vasilika must pay double the rate for pasturing his animals there. If 621 no permission has been granted, he must pay triple the rate for residents. The 233 question of when and if the new settlers in Vasilika—the shepherds, who had been living there since 1950—would be considered residents of Vasilika, that is, [622] full-fledged citizens of the *kinotis*, was of significance both to the village and to the shepherds. They were finally granted this privilege in 1959.

423 651 The actual process of preparing the tax rolls consists of a series of agreements among the villagers, including their council members, as to what amount of property they will declare. In consequence, the tax rolls do not necessarily [623] represent an accurate and complete accounting of property ownership in the *kinotis*. Farmers often try to hide some of their holdings and keep some of their [583] transactions quiet. For example, in order to pay less in taxes on the value of dowries, the records may show the transfer of a smaller parcel of land to the groom than the one privately agreed on and later privately carried out. Records [652] are probably being kept more accurately now, since credit from the Agricultural Bank is based on land holdings, and proof of ownership must be given to the bank.

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Vasilika



The village council also has initial jurisdiction over monies which are not derived from the taxes already mentioned. There is a levy amounting to two percent a year of the value of the cotton and wheat produced by each farmer, three percent of the value of any inheritance, and three percent of the value of money and property given as a dowry for any village girl. The proceeds of these taxes are deposited in the village account in Amphiklia. A tax on tobacco production is paid to the national government. The amount collected from the tobacco tax is redistributed to all communities in Greece on a per capita basis for schools, roads, and the like. Tobacco-growing villages like Vasilika receive an additional sum in proportion to the quantity of tobacco produced in the community.

Initial jurisdiction in the disposal of all monies belonging to the *kinotis* consists in the preparation of the village budget by the council. The task is done under the close supervision of the nomarch's office. Printed forms for village budgets are available at stationery stores and must be purchased and used. The form includes a list of items for which the community may be expected to spend its money and another list of items from which income is derived. It is the secretary's work actually to fill in the form in quadruplicate. He does so at a meeting of village secretaries called by the nomarch and held in Levadhia. The forms are then checked by the nomarch's office and some changes may be imposed. The expenses listed on the form include the secretary's salary, the salaries of the two village policemen, the salary of an assistant treasurer in Amphiklia, whatever is due the tax collector (who seemed in 1956 to be getting six percent of the amount collected), rent to the church for office space, several newspapers brought by train from Athens each day, books for the school (but not for individual students), road repairs, and the like. The completed document becomes, in fact, a theoretical model for appropriate village income and expenditure rather than a reasonable estimate of future financial transactions. Some of the income actually will be deposited in the account of the village and some of the expenditures will be made, but most will not, and even those transactions that do occur may not be made in the sums designated in the budget.

Let us consider income first. The collection of taxes from the farmers is not carried out regularly. When no collector comes to the village, the farmers are supposed to go to Amphiklia to pay their taxes, but few do so. During our stay in the village, a new collector came to Vasilika and sat in the *aghora* for an entire day accepting money from the farmers. They paid only part of their previous year's assessment, and so remained a year in arrears. The interest charge on late tax payments is only sporadically collected from the farmers. Just as the collection of monies is irregular, so is the payment of salaries and the expenditure of other funds. For example, the secretary at one point had not received his monthly salary of 350 drachmas for several months. The use of monies for other purposes depends on the interest of the villagers in village projects, and for the most part such interest is lacking. The village governing body and the secretary fulfill the formal responsibilities placed upon them by the national government, but do not seem to feel that the forms must reflect reality.

It is clear from the foregoing that in the formal political organization of Greece the village council has little power even over affairs for which it has some

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)/63 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



planting that season accepted the fact with resignation. The agitation died down after several days and the matter was not mentioned again.

Let us return now to the other officials and organizations that have responsibilities concerning the village as a whole. Law enforcement in Vasilika is in the hands of two *aghrofilakes* (rural policemen). They are appointed by the nomarch and are responsible for preventing and detecting animal trespass in the fields and thefts of produce as well as of personal property. They also watch sales of cotton and tobacco and can therefore furnish information of value for estimating produce taxes. The village police are sometimes called in to deal with disorderly conduct or with any physical violence which threatens to become serious. The *aghrofilakes* wear grey uniforms with green trim and are easily distinguished from the other villagers. Vasilika's police used to be *kseni* (strangers) who came from two different neighboring villages, but in 1961 the men were natives of the village who were relatives of the then current president.

There are two other semigovernmental village-wide organizations: the agricultural cooperative credit society, and the welfare committee. The villagers elect a president of the credit society, whose signature is necessary on almost all requests for credit, since the Agricultural Bank works in conjunction with the cooperative. The village priest, the president of the council, and the president of the agricultural credit society constitute the welfare committee. They attest to the financial need of a villager who wishes to avail himself of free government welfare services. In most cases, however, the village families who occasionally need help receive irregular gifts of food and clothing from other village families, and their plight is not considered a matter for joint village action. When several cartons of surplus American butter, cheese, and powdered milk reached the village, it was the priest who distributed the goods. On that occasion, the daughter of one of the recipients brought some butter (which the villagers usually do not use in cooking or baking) to a neighbor's daughter, who contributed eggs, flour, and sugar. The two girls spent a busy afternoon mixing a cake according to a half-remembered recipe given them by an extension worker some years before. The cake was not a success by any standards for such confections, but the girls were satisfied because they had produced a European-style sweet.

## The Village School

The village school is supervised and controlled by the Ministry of Education in Athens. The teacher is appointed by the ministry, which also prescribes the curriculum. In Vasilika, in 1955–1956, the school had thirty pupils distributed unevenly among the six grades. The first grade had the largest number of children because its ranks were augmented by the children of the shepherds, some of whom had had no previous schooling and were assigned to the first grade regardless of age. A man originally from the Peloponnesus taught the children. He had married a woman from Parori, who was herself one of the

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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622 As one would expect in any small community whose members
624 are acquainted from childhood, the effectiveness of formal leadership depends very much upon the personalities of the office holders. In some villages, the president and secretary have little real importance. As a minimum, they must keep records to
[702] allow the army to draft the young men when their age group
[653] is called up, and it is their duty to muster the able-bodied villagers for a fixed number of days' labor on roads or other public works when ordered to do so by officials of the central govern-
[651] ment. This labor service is the only form of direct taxation now enforced upon peasants, and money payment may be substituted for personal service if anyone cares to do so.

622 Only when a village chooses to undertake local improve-
631 ments requiring money or supplies from outside sources does
652 the sphere of local government expand from this legal minimum. In such cases, the village president, perhaps assisted by some other members of the council, is expected to represent the village in all dealings with the agents of the central government from whom help is sought; and if the village contracts a corporate loan for some project, then the president becomes responsible for collecting the sums needed to repay the loan.

621 Generally, the villagers of Greece have a deep-seated and not
654 altogether groundless distrust of outsiders, particularly of gov-
x178 ernment representatives, whom they suspect of being more
[609] often out to fleece than to help them. Long and persistent persuasion is therefore usually required on the part of government officials to overcome this suspicion, and open the way for technical or other improvements in village life. More often than not, the initiative in bringing about the changes which have come to many villages in the past ten years came from outside the village, from the central government. Only after a start had been made, and the practical advantage of some new crop or technique had been demonstrated on a small scale, did the farmers

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Lofiscos

[Villages of the Plains]



621 penetrated so far into the heart of the Thessalian plain, the vil-
x178 lagers saw nothing of them at first hand. Life went on smoothly,
[669] and the market for wheat was good. In general, then, the tenor of life in Lofiscos is a thoroughly conservative one. In 1920 the villagers attained their hearts' desire – possession of the land; and since then nothing has happened to make them wish to change the way they live.

x178 The general conservatism of the village is reflected in the
241 caution with which the farmers have taken up new techniques
433 and ideas. There was no pressing economic necessity to impel them to experiment. Familiar methods and crops did well enough. Yet there are at present real signs of technical change.
• [652] In 1952 fertilizer came in for the first time. Up till then no one in the village had used it. In that year, a representative of the Agricultural Bank visited the village, and urged the farmers to
[243] buy fertilizer on credit. A few of them made the experiment; the results they achieved convinced all the rest, for with fertilizer the wheat crop was nearly twice what had been usual before. Every farmer is now using fertilizer, and the net production of the fields is rising accordingly.

[652] Then in 1956 a single farmer, more venturesome than his fel-
406 lows, contracted a five-year loan with the Agricultural Bank in
[312] order to install a well and pump with which to irrigate four acres. This represented a far greater departure from custom than the use of fertilizer. Wheat does not need irrigation in Thessaly, and to repay the cost of the well and pump new crops
[248] had to be introduced. Cotton was the answer, and the results in 1956, when I visited the village, were already so promising that several other farmers were planning to install a well-pump irrigation system in their fields, and grow cotton the next year. By doing so they can multiply their cash yield per acre several times as compared to the traditional income from wheat farming. This prospect is all the farmers need to persuade them to go ahead.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Lofiscos

[Villages of the Plains]



While I did not come to know the village well enough to be sure, my impression was that the decisive break-through in 1952 was not a matter of new knowledge or information so much as a change in financial attitudes. That is to say, before 1952 the peasants of Lofiscos looked upon indebtedness with horror. Anyone who went to a bank and of his own free will incurred a debt was, they felt, courting disaster. This was not far from the case in the 1920's and early 1930's when agricultural prices were uncertain, bank interest high, and foreclosure a possibility. In 1956 bank interest was still high – between 7 and 8 per cent for loans to individual farmers – but the price of wheat was fixed ahead of time by the government, and the price of fertilizer had been lowered by government subsidy. As a result, a simple computation could assure the borrower of what he stood to gain. This was what the farmers of Lofiscos learned in 1952. They allowed the Bank's representative to convince them that there were times and circumstances when borrowing was not the first step to perdition, but a sure (or nearly sure) way to greater income.

Farming in Lofiscos has always, for as long as men can recall, been mainly directed at market sale. Wheat from the village has gone to Volos or Larissa year after year, and, since 1920 at least, the peasants have been able to buy town products as they wanted them. But in general they have preferred hoarding to spending. In Turkish times, to build a comfortable new house or to dress elaborately would simply have attracted the attention of some hungry tax or rent collector; hence there was a strong motive for concealing behind an unpretentious, indeed poor-seeming, exterior any wealth that might accumulate. This attitude apparently survived under Greek administration, even after the peasants of the village ceased to owe rents to a landlord and secured the whole harvest as their own. It still lingers: hence the shabby appearance of the village and its inhabitants.

If the first important break with old traditional patterns of

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Cherasia

[Hill Villages]



thus prevent, or at least make more difficult, any future guerrilla action based upon the upper village. 727 653

The result of these expenditures is clearly visible today. The village looks handsomer than ever before; the sound of flowing water resounds refreshingly beside the neatly paved square in the center of the village, and the bright new tile roofs of the village shine in the sun. Only the houses of Nea Eleftherohori rival the impressive outward appearance of Cherasia, and the public structures of Nea Eleftherohori are far inferior to the new ones of the Thessalian village.

Nor have governmental efforts ended there. An agricultural extension agent visits Cherasia once or twice a month – a far more frequent visitation than I found in any other village. He attempted to establish viticulture and fruit trees in the village; but the vines perished, and the fruit trees are still spindly saplings, not yet bearing anything. Finally, additional water works are in process of construction, on the strength of a loan from the Ministry of Interior, issued free of interest and repayable in installments, starting only after five years. When this is finished, there will be enough water to irrigate 50 stremmata (12½ acres) of bottom land, and thus open up a new range of agricultural possibilities for the village. 242 654 241 653 241 652

Certainly, no one can say that either money or skill has been stinted in trying to make the life of Cherasia tolerable for its inhabitants. Yet it was perfectly apparent in 1956 that the effort had been totally inadequate. The people of the village were sullen and suspicious, and felt no gratitude toward the government authorities who had done so much for them. The spirit of the village seemed almost the same as in 1947, with the difference that now the rightists were again on top, and the majority saw little hope for gaining even the nighttime control their party had enjoyed in 1947. In talking with one or two of the villagers I gained the impression that they perversely hoped the 178× 829 669 241 433

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Kardamili

[Hill Villages]



commands a premium price in Athens and elsewhere, the use of fertilizer becomes a somewhat dubious economic advantage. The fact is, I believe, that the age-old adjustment of traditional peasant agriculture in the olive-growing regions of Greece is very nearly perfect. Certainly every scrap of potential soil is used in Kardamili, and the peasants know very well how to care for their trees. Except for chemical sprays that discourage a number of insect pests damaging to the crop, scientific agriculture has not yet devised any very important improvement upon traditional peasant methods of olive culture. But sprays were known in Kardamili before the war, and their use was resumed as soon as the chemicals became available.

In 1956 the village launched a project for bringing water down the mountain. An interest-free government loan made the enterprise possible; but, even when completed, the water pipes will not supply more than household needs, leaving a little over, perhaps, for watering gardens. Shortage of water has been the long-standing problem of the community. There was scarcely enough to drink when I was there, and each glassful was treated as something precious, since the women of the village had to carry it in jars from a trickling spring half a mile away.

Yet in spite of the stability of agricultural methods, the social system of the village, to all appearances, is beginning to change, more or less as the social system of Nea Eleftherohori is changing. For one thing, the villagers have begun to place great hopes in education, seeing in it a means of escaping from the land. Fifteen boys from the village were enrolled in the gymnasium in Kalamata in 1956, a quite considerable number in view of the fact that they had to live away from home, and thus had to meet expenses far greater than those confronting the boys from Nea Eleftherohori. In Kardamili itself, there is a school that teaches the first two years of the standard four-year gymnasium course. This school had eighty students, five more than

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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621 631 178 a distinguished man in any company. Authority seemed to rest as naturally upon his shoulders as the callouses rested upon his palms. This easy relation between village officers and the people of their community had definitely not been characteristic in 1947.

621 631 652 Local government in Greece was suffering, however, from a chronic and serious handicap. Local authorities lacked funds, and could seldom do anything beyond routine administration without borrowing from some agency of the central government. [1] The result of this situation was to extend greatly the real authority and influence of the central government over local affairs. Village and municipal authorities spent a great deal of time waiting in the anterooms of officials of the central government in the hope of securing money with which to carry through some local improvement.

621 651 652 178 631 Villages had always depended on the Agricultural Bank or on one of the central ministries for finding money for any important project; cities and towns until 1949 had financed their local expenditures mainly through excise duties imposed upon goods brought into the municipality. Before that year, long lines of peasant carts, waiting their turn at municipal excise stations, were a frequent sight in the outskirts of every town. Internal tariffs were abolished in 1949, however, and the share of the cigarette tax, levied nationally, which was assigned to municipalities in lieu of these excises proved generally inadequate. Town governments were therefore in poor shape financially, and any public improvements that were made came from special grants or loans from the central government.

[633] [365] 1. The municipality of Athens, for example, had been insolvent for as long as anyone cared to recall. The problem was such that in 1955 and again in 1956, the Athens Power Company threatened to cut off the supply of electricity to municipal institutions unless some of the back bills were paid.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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of local resources were to occur, then restriction of current consumption would be necessary. Money and goods would have to be diverted from consumption to capital construction. Without such diversion, the country was condemned to chronic poverty, unless foreign investment and financing came to the rescue. Up to 1956 Greece had indeed depended upon foreign investment for its capital development; but the United States Congress could scarcely be counted upon to continue its support indefinitely. In fact, between 1954 and 1956 it became clear that American aid to Greece was to be shaped by more narrowly conceived American interests, which would mean that military subsidy and the disposal of surplus American agricultural products would take precedence over industrial or any other sort of capital investment in Greece. Moreover, a Greek government that depended upon American bounty would necessarily surrender a large portion of its effective sovereignty, as happened between 1947 and 1952. Such a policy would expose Greek authorities to charges of acting as craven "yes men" to the Americans, and of betraying Greek national interests, as, for instance, in Cyprus.

Dependence upon foreign funds to finance capital development was therefore a poor substitute for financing such development from local resources. Yet no one in Greece wanted to reduce and few wished to restrict the standard of living. The general public was impatient of austerity and wanted an immediate and miraculous increase in consumption levels. The chronic disbalance of the governmental budget reflected (among other factors) the pressure of these demands – demands for higher pensions and salaries, for better unemployment, medical and old-age benefits, and the like. To offer present hardship in the hope of future amelioration of economic conditions was therefore politically unthinkable, even though this was the only program that could really cope with the prob-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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lems Greece confronted. Inflating the currency to pay current running expenses and to finance a modest program of government capital investment proved far more palatable politically, even though such a policy penalized the salaried and wage-earning classes, and led to recurrent crises as the price level outran their incomes.

Greece shares this problem with other underdeveloped nations in which population growth tends to equal or outstrip increases in productivity, while at the same time superficial contact with modern economic ideas has convinced leaders of public opinion that poverty is neither inevitable nor necessary, but can and should be relieved by government action. Under these circumstances, the processes of parliamentary government are most unlikely to turn up politicians who dare to contradict the immediate desire of the electorate for an improvement of living standards. Political irresponsibility toward fundamental economic problems, of a type so widespread in Greece, is a normal and all but inevitable result.

To 1956, at least, the discrepancy between the tenor of political debate and the planning of technicians in the economic ministries of the Greek government seems to have had only slight effect upon the practical realization of economic plans. In some cases, the fact that the minister was so often distracted by the exigencies of the political game may even have given civil servants a freer hand than they might otherwise have had. But if this was so, the major reason for it was the existence of the American aid mission, and the ultimate dependence of most economic advance upon grants from American authorities. That is to say, a senior civil servant, when confronted by his minister, could always point out that if his plans were not approved, then there might be a reckoning with the Americans, whose ideas about how the Greek government should try to shape the economy had much in common with the civil servant's approach, and little with that of the politicians.

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exchange for their agricultural products they get, kerosene, thread, buttons, needles, rice, sugar, tea, dried fish, beans, candy, olives, olive oil, soap and salt. Most farmers hang around the bazaar corners to watch the bargaining tricks of livestock merchants, visiting other friends from other villages, or buy and sell ocen, or watch the bazaar price for different commodities. These bazaars for many farmers are reliable centers of information, to know how he can advantageously exchange his goods for the needs of his family. Based of long experience, the farmer has found it safer to keep his goods rather than money. Money, he thinks, creates more enemies than anything else. 436

The economic system which the farmer of Megali Vrisi and in general the farmer of the area developed is peculiar to one crop farming. The farmer usually makes all his purchases from one merchant, who could give him credit and collect it at harvest time in kind. The farmer goes to the market once a week for his needs. His merchant keeps the account. The farmer never keeps any account and never tries to investigate his accounts fearing he may lose his chance of getting credit. If the merchant is sincere and God-fearing and does not /21/ like to cheat the farmer, the farmer may be lucky, but I question this since my experience in that area proved to me, that in spite of the large amount of non-collected debts, the merchants were far better off than the farmers. At harvest season the merchants gather around the coffee houses. They carry scales and a sack, and go from house to house to collect the debts in kind. If the farmer had a poor year, he usually pretends to be missing from the village so as to delay his year's payment and postpone it for the coming year. Hard feelings usually develop and if the merchant stops the credit he may lose what he already has to collect. Thus the farmer is tied up to the merchant and the merchant is forced to continue credit to the farmer. Bad years usually create hard feeling between these two groups. The agricultural bank which tried hard to displace the merchants could not very well do it. The loans it offered were very little and could not cover all the needs of the farmer. The

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There is at present a paradoxical situation in Greece. There is pride in the many co-operatives, spread throughout the country; there is delight on the part of some of the technical assistants because the groundwork for the introduction of necessary change is there, and there is dismay on the part of others that the Greeks do not know what co-operation means, that they have to be compelled to work for the benefit of the village, to be prevented from destroying its resources, and to be coerced to co-operate even in efforts for their own welfare. There is distress over the number of pressure groups created to get whatever they can from the government. All this is true. According to their own phrasing of co-operation and within the framework of the meaningful units, the Greeks were, and to some extent are now completely co-operative. Families and villages were responsible for their own indigent; a prominent peasant would impoverish himself to build a village school or improve the water system. They made their own decisions and carried them out; they chose their own leaders. The first co-operatives were started on local initiative in the last century. But later, the central government began to institute co-operatives on a foreign pattern, taking no account of the existing units of co-operation, or of the existing patterns of self-participation. The villages were not allowed a responsible role in creating the co-operatives—in fact, in co-operating. The state-financed Agricultural Bank has been in charge of creating local credit co-operatives but the peasants have felt that this was a government affair. Actually the rate, which was eight per cent at the time of the establishment of the bank in 1928, and is now as high as 18 per cent, with incidental fees, which peasants get from the bank through their credit co-operatives, does not seem to have been set with the welfare of the farmers in view, or according to their decision. In 1936, more than 3,000 of the 3,761 were credit co-operatives under the central supervision of the state. The others, such as the producers' co-operatives, were mainly compulsory. Such were the citrus growers' associations in Crete, the wine growers' association in Samos, Levkas, Attica, and Chalkis. There are now marketing co-operatives and machine-owning co-operatives, as well as a growing number of processing co-operatives. In general, the co-operatives are firmly controlled by the central government and the farmers are not even allowed to co-operate to the extent of electing their own officers. As a result, the attitude toward external authority has been evoked, and, in most cases, co-operation has to be compulsory as all government legislation has to be compulsory, and the so-called co-operative decisions are circumvented like all government decisions. Another attitude has also been evoked, particularly among those Greeks who welcomed the dictatorship; deprived of responsible decision and participation, these people fell into the pattern of accepted dependency; such people, unaware that they are "co-operating", say: "The government is